

was given the benefit of the GI bill. The GI bill made the difference in my life, enabling me to use the knowledge and programs I studied and learned to start a business that became an industry. It is the computing industry, as contrasted to the computer industry, the hardware industry. To me it was a great example of the way government can empower individuals and families to improve their lives.

It is a lesson I will never forget. The education I got through the GI bill set the foundation for me to build that business. When I look at what happened with ADP and the number of people it has put together, 33,000 employees, processing paychecks for 33 million people across our country and others.

When I was finishing my 30th year in business, I thought there were other things I ought to try to do to help pay back what I thought was a unique opportunity. I wanted to make sure that it continued to exist for others, as well. I came to the Senate. I ran in 1982 and was elected then. I brought what was a fairly unique perspective because there weren't, at that time, as there are now, so many businesspeople who came from not having had an elective office experience but came in fresh from the business to the Senate.

When I got here, my goals were to try again to permit people to think independently, to make sure that the rights and the freedoms we enjoyed would be protected, to make sure there would be an opportunity for those who could learn without having, necessarily, the financing to do it. That is what the GI bill taught me. It has been my hope that people would understand that these opportunities must continue to exist. That is why we have these discussions about investing in education, making sure children have the appropriate nutrition, and that people can count on getting their health protected when they have a problem, or at least making certain as they grow and mature that they know they don't have to worry about an illness wiping out not only their assets but also demolishing their health.

Just so everybody knows, I am going to take some time here. Therefore, it may take a little time for me to do the whole story. I see the majority leader either looking at me so anxious to hear the whole story that he wanted to ask me what it was.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if the distinguished Senator from New Jersey would yield, perhaps that is a good point. Yes, I would like to hear the story uninterrupted. If the Senator would allow us to do a little bit of leadership business—one of which, or both of which I know the Senator would be very interested in—I ask, with the agreement of the Senator from New Jersey, that his statement appear in the RECORD as if uninterrupted, and the exchange with Senator DASCHLE, our colloquy, appear after his remarks.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I am happy to cooperate because I have a sense that

the subject to be included in their remarks is one with which I have intense fascination.

I am happy to yield to the distinguished leaders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is it the majority leader's intention the Senator from New Jersey will hold the floor, following the business?

Mr. LOTT. That would be my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

Mr. LOTT. I yield to Senator DASCHLE.

THE OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, although there are a lot of good things in the bill we are about to debate, there is one glaring omission—legislation to provide Amtrak with the authority to issue tax credit bonds for capital improvements. This bonding authority is critical to Amtrak's future and to the economic health of the northeast and many other areas of the country.

I have discussed this issue with members of my caucus. We had a very spirited discussion in our caucus this morning, and I know how strongly they support Amtrak and this legislation. We are very disappointed this provision was not included in this otherwise praiseworthy legislation. Amtrak supporters will not give up on passing it. In order to help them secure enactment of this important measure next year, the majority leader and I have discussed and agreed on how best to proceed. I yield the floor to allow the majority leader to describe what that understanding is at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I thank the Democratic leader for his fine work on this issue. I know there is a lot of passion, a lot of support for Amtrak. But let me remind my colleagues, I am one of those supporters. I have been an active supporter of the national rail passenger system and was very much involved a couple of years ago when we passed the Amtrak legislation. I had some strong opposition on our side of the aisle. I think we need it.

Now, I must confess one of the reasons I think we need it is I want us to have good service, not just in the northeast but I also would like to have access from my own State of Mississippi to be able to get to Atlanta and Washington and Boston, and we are the beneficiaries of Amtrak service. I think we have to do it. I have pledged if it can't run efficiently, if it cannot run without going into debt, at some point we may want to say we just can't do that and decide what is going to be the successor program.

But I also think it is guaranteed and doomed to failure if we don't give it an opportunity to succeed. If you don't have modern equipment, if you don't

have the new fast trains, if you don't have a rapid rail system, it will not work.

So I support this legislation. I want to commit to our colleagues here that I will join with Senator DASCHLE in cosponsoring this legislation next year. We will work together to get the appropriate hearings in the Finance Committee and hopefully in the Commerce Committee, too—even though this bill is under the Finance subcommittee jurisdiction because of the tax aspects of it—but the Amtrak part of it, of course, would fall under Commerce. I am on both committees and Senator DASCHLE will probably be on the Finance Committee, too. We will work with the ranking member and the chairman to get hearings and move this legislation.

I cannot guarantee we will have the votes or that it will not be filibustered or that we can break a filibuster, but I think it is the right thing to do. I might just add, the chairman of the Amtrak board, Governor Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin, has been very actively involved. He supports this legislation. He has called me personally about this legislation. He really cares about it.

When we talk about bipartisanship, transportation is an issue on which we have been able to work together in a bipartisan way, whether it is roads, AIR-21, TEA-21, Amtrak, rapid rail system. We can do it again.

Maybe we can improve on this bill. We talked about that in an exchange yesterday. Maybe there are some things we can do, some tweaks that would make it better and resolve some of the concerns. And we will try to do that. I am prepared to make that commitment. I believe we can do it early next year. I am not talking about having it languish; I am trying to get movement on it in the first 3 months, 6 months of the session, so those who have reservations can offer amendments and we will vote on them. Hopefully, we can get it done, and I commit to do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I have long been a supporter of Amtrak. I was chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation before my friend, Mr. LAUTENBERG, swore to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies of the United States, foreign and domestic. I was for it then. I am for it now. We had some problems in connection with putting this measure into this bill. I don't need to go into those problems here.

But I want to assure Mr. BIDEN and I want to assure Mr. LAUTENBERG, and assure both leaders, that I will do anything I can next year to support this legislation. I am a cosponsor of the bill, and I will do my best to help enact it at the earliest possible date in the coming Congress. Like the distinguished majority leader, I can't guarantee anything except that I will do

my best to be helpful. Certainly on the Appropriations Committee, if there is an appropriations item, as always, I will support it. Amtrak comes to West Virginia. It comes 3 days a week. I wish it came more often.

But I support Amtrak as much as anybody in this Chamber. We don't have large airports in West Virginia; all we have is highways. We certainly are grateful for and certainly very supportive of the limited amount of rail transportation we have. We used to have the Hilltopper; we used to have the Mountaineer in West Virginia. I have been a supporter of the Cardinal longer than I can remember.

So Senators may be reassured that I shall do everything I can within my power next year to be helpful.

The principal cosponsors, Mr. LAUTENBERG and Mr. BIDEN, made a strong case for the importance of this vital legislation. It will be a central part of our efforts to ensure that our Amtrak system not only is maintained but is also able to make necessary improvements in the future to ensure its continued success.

I thank all Senators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have been here, not as many years by far as most everyone on this floor right now, but it is not often that you see the two leaders and our longtime leader Senator BYRD, stand and say they will support a piece of legislation. I have never seen it happen before. I think this is to show the intensity of the feelings of the people who support this legislation, led by Senator JOE BIDEN. So I am really pleased it appears at this stage that the three leaders, Senator LOTT, Senator DASCHLE, and Senator BYRD, have agreed to do this.

I was at lunch today with Senator HOLLINGS, who is the ranking Democrat on the committee of jurisdiction that may have something to do with this, the Commerce Committee. He said he will do everything he can to move this matter along. I know I will. Senator SPECTER, on the other side of the aisle, said he would do anything possible to move this along. This is a rare occasion in the Senate that you see this much support for a piece of legislation.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I could ask my colleagues to defer just a moment, Senator DASCHLE and I would like to get one more unanimous consent agreement in. Then I would like to yield to the Senators who are on their feet.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, may I, with all due respect, remind the majority leader and the President that I yielded time based on the fact that I would recover the floor.

Mr. LOTT. There is no question about it. I thought perhaps the Senator would want to comment, too, on what has just transpired. But I do want to include in the RECORD the fact that Senator STEVENS also has assured our

colleagues, and has reminded me again, he also commits, as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, his continued support for Amtrak.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. LOTT. With that, I do understand the Senate will shortly receive from the House the appropriations bill containing the final appropriations measures. I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding receipt of the papers, the Senate proceed to vote immediately on adoption of the conference report and, following passage, there be 40 minutes of explanation to be equally divided between the two leaders, with 20 minutes additional under the control of Senator BYRD, 45 minutes under the control of Senator GRAHAM of Florida, and 10 minutes of Senator LOTT's time to be controlled by Senator SPECTER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I want to, before the majority leader leaves the floor, thank him.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I could confirm, the unanimous consent was agreed to?

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No objection was heard. I recognized the Senator from Delaware thinking he wished to object.

Is there objection?

Mr. BIDEN. No, I beg your pardon, I do not wish to object or seek recognition.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under parliamentary procedure, the Senator from New Jersey has the floor. He yielded it to the majority leader and the Democratic leader for the conduct of certain items of business. Following that point, Senators seeking to speak will have to receive the approval or approbation of the Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask the Senator to yield me a very brief time.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I thank the Chair for that recollection. I will be happy to yield to our friend from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. Before the majority leader leaves the floor, I want to personally thank him. I want to thank the minority leader, the Democratic leader, and I guess most of all I want to thank Senator BYRD and Senator STEVENS as well.

I have been here for 28 years. I have never once come to the floor to threaten to engage in an extended debate on a matter. I did that this morning in our caucus. I am not suggesting my colleagues responded because I did that. I am suggesting that I believed my colleagues who are on their feet felt extremely strongly about what was about to happen; that is, Amtrak cannot make it through the year 2001 and

meet the obligation that has been imposed upon it without being brought up to speed, figuratively and literally, in terms of equipment, track, and the like.

When this proposal that had 56 cosponsors and passed in another vehicle with 60-some votes and with 260-some votes in the House was not going to be included in this omnibus bill, I must tell my colleagues, I was very upset.

In light of the fact that the leadership of the Appropriations Committee of the Senate as a whole and of the Commerce Committee, at least on one side of the Commerce Committee, have indicated to me they will introduce and move rapidly, as best they can, funding for Amtrak—I will not take the time to go into what it all does and what it means—then that is good enough for me. I will withdraw any attempt to delay consideration of this final bill.

Also, I know Senator MOYNIHAN and Senator LAUTENBERG are leaving. Senator LAUTENBERG has been Mr. Amtrak. Senator LAUTENBERG, since he has been here, in large part because of his disposition and in no small part because of the particular position of authority he occupied on the Appropriations Committee, has been—I ride a train every day and people say to me: You know, JOE, thanks for defending Amtrak.

I say: No, don't thank me, call Senator LAUTENBERG. I literally say that because it is true.

Also on the floor is a Senator who is Mr. Transportation. He has given us all a lesson, as only he can, for the past 18 years on the necessity of Amtrak not merely in the Northeast corridor, but there is no alternative in this Nation to not have a mass transit interstate system.

I want everybody to understand—again, I will put something in the RECORD; I won't take the time now—this is not just parochially important to the Senators from Delaware, New Jersey, Vermont, Massachusetts, all of whom are on the floor. This is important to Florida; it is important to the Southeast corridor; it is important to Oregon, Washington, Nevada. This is the only alternative we have.

It seems to me, after discussion with the men I have named today—the distinguished Senator from West Virginia, the Senator from Mississippi, the Senator from North Dakota, and others—that we are all singing from the same hymnal now. There seems to be for the first time in my recollection, I say to my friend from New York who is standing, a genuine acknowledgment that there is no transportation scheme in America that will serve America without a major component of it being a rapid transit interstate system for passengers.

I am looking forward to this being the first bipartisan effort next year. I sincerely hope the incoming President will understand our regional needs.

I conclude by saying I thought federalism was about one section of the